Mi-pham's Theory of Interpretation

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Introduction

This chapter takes for its subject matter the theory of interpretation explicitly advanced by the late Tibetan scholastic philosopher 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham rgya-mtsho (1846–1912).[1] We will not be concerned with Mi-pham's actual application of this theory in his commentarial writing: his tremendous output (traditionally said to amount to thirty-two large Tibetan volumes) precludes our undertaking here a critical study, or even a perfunctory sketch, of his practice of interpretation.

The scriptural corpus representing the transmitted doctrine (Skt. *āgama,* Tib. *lung*) of the Buddha, the enlightening teaching of the enlightened sage, is, by virtue of its extent and heterogeneous composition, a source of bewilderment no less than of illumination for those who have not fully realized the founder's intention. In the face of apparent contradiction and obscurity systematic interpretation is required, and, so that this does not become merely the arbitrary reformulation of the doctrine according to erroneous preconception or pure fancy, interpretive guidelines have been elaborated within the Buddhist tradition. We must thus distinguish carefully at the outset between Buddhist *interpretations* and *rules for interpretation,* the latter being those directives whereby the former, representing the actual content of the teaching, may be established. Rules of thumb, however, if not grounded in reasonable extrasystemic foundations, may support the construction of fantastic theories (if unreasonable) or conduce to circularity (if purely intrasystemic).[2] A complete *theory of interpretation* should, therefore, be more than a miscellany of such rules; it must ground its rules and indicate their proper application. Read with this in mind, the śāstraic lists of rules for interpretation, so familiar to students of Buddhism, seem not to resolve satisfactorily the problem for whose solution they were drawn up.

We must distinguish, too, between *implicit* and *explicit* rules for or

theories of interpretation. In our study of a given interpretation of the doctrine we may arrive at the conclusion that the interpreter is guided in his thinking by certain principles which, however, he never actually sets forth. For strictly formal reasons such a conclusion can never be more than probabilistic, though the particulars in any given case may strongly suggest our determination of the interpretive principles in question to be appropriate.[3] Nonetheless, it is only when an explicit statement of such principles is available to us that we can speak authoritatively of an actual theory of interpretation. This does not mean, of course, that explicit theoretical statements allow us to assume without further evidence that their author ever actually employed his theory in practice. Indeed, the examination of his actual interpretive work may lead us to discover that his explicit theory could not have supported his own avowed conclusions. We may infer that our author misapplied his own theory, or that there are further implicit principles he assumed but did not set forth—in other words, that his theory was deficient even with respect to his own interpretive work. This problem need concern us no longer, for only the fundamental distinction made here is relevant to the present investigation.

These remarks may help to clarify the manner in which the central concerns of this chapter are to be related to the multifarious body of thought we in the West call hermeneutics. As a point of departure, at least, our problematic lies within the domain of scriptural interpretation. Specifically, it centers on the theory of the interpretation of Buddhist scriptures. As we proceed, however, it will become apparent that Mi-pham's theory addresses basic philosophical concerns, and that our understanding of just what, in Mi-pham's case, it is that can be termed "Buddhist hermeneutics" will have to be broadened accordingly.

The Scholastic Background

Mi-pham did not create his theory *ex nihilo*. Its ingredients, one and all, were derived from traditions of scholastic exegesis that can be traced back to India, to sūtras such as the *Saṃdhinirmocana,* and to such towering interpreters of the Buddha's doctrine as Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, Dharmakīrti and Candrakīrti. The historical evolution of all the many relevant themes cannot be surveyed here. What is most useful for our present purposes is some knowledge of the tradition on which Mi-pham immediately drew. We are fortunate that this tradition is represented to some extent in the work of Mi-pham's senior contemporary 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas (1813–1899/1900).[4]

Kong-sprul's *The All-Embracing Treasury of Knowledge (Shes bya kun khyab mdzod)* was the last great Tibetan encyclopedia.[5] Its three volumes sur-

vey all branches of Tibetan scholastic learning with erudition and clarity, if not often with great originality. Of its ten books, the seventh is devoted to "the progressive disclosure of the lesson of superior discernment" *(lhag pa shes rab kyi bslab pa rim par phye ba).* The methods and objects of Buddhist scriptural interpretation are the subject matter of the first two chapters of this book: (1) the ascertainment of the interpretive keys *('jal byed kyi lde'u mig rnam par nges pa,* viz. that open up the treasure-house of the genuine doctrine, which is the object of interpretation, *gzhal bya'i dam chos rin chen mdzod khang);* and (2) the ascertainment of provisional and definitive meaning in connection with the three wheels, and of the two truths and dependent origination *('khor lo gsum gyi drang nges dang bden gnyis rten 'brel rnam-par nges pa).* As the second of these treats the Buddha's teaching *qua* object of interpretation in particular, its contents would have to be surveyed in any thorough treatment of Tibetan hermeneutics.[6] It is the first, however, that encompasses the relevant background for Mi-pham's work, and so only its contents will be described here.

In his general introduction to "the ascertainment of the interpretive keys," Kong-sprul proposes that study *(thos pa)* alone is productive only of rough understanding *(rags par go ba)* of its objects and leaves us still subject to doubts. The demand for certainty *(nges shes)* requires that we exercise discernment born of critical reasoning *(bsam byung gi shes rab),* the medium of which is discursive thought *(yid kyi brjod pa).* The precise manner in which this is to be exercised with respect to the objects of study may be summarized with reference to the interpretive keys.

The keys themselves are considered throughout the remainder of the chapter. They fall into the two broad categories of those which are common (*thun mong,* viz. to the interpretation of both sūtras and tantras) and those which are uncommon (*thun mong ma yin pa,* viz. which uniquely pertain to the interpretation of tantras). To the first of these categories belong four sets of rules of thumb, which distinguish: (1) provisional meaning *(drang don)* and definitive meaning *(nges don),* (2) four special intentions *(dgongs pa bzhi)* and four hidden intentions *(ldem dgongs bzhi),* (3) four orientations *(rton pa bzhi),* and (4) four principles of reason *(rigs pa bzhi).* The first three of these groups have been discussed at length elsewhere[7] and will be considered briefly in connection with Mi-pham's work below. The fourth has not, to the best of my knowledge, received extended scholarly attention outside traditional Buddhist circles and our efforts here will for the most part concern it.

Kong-sprul's discussion of the interpretive keys which apply uniquely to the tantras outlines the two sets of rules known as the six parameters *(mtha' drug)* and four modes *(tshul bzhi).* These have also been considered elsewhere and so need not detain us here.[8]

It should be noted that Kong-sprul nowhere seeks to explain the manner in which all these rules are to be applied, or the manner in which they complement, or relate to, one another. Presumably we are to master their use inductively, by discovering in the commentarial literature their actual utilization. This leaves Tibetan hermeneutics in roughly the condition of its premodern western counterpart.[9] This state of affairs is Mi-pham's point of departure.

Kong-sprul's Definitions of the Four Principles of Reason

The four principles of reason are in Sanskrit called the *yukti-catuṣṭayam.*[10] The term *yukti,* which may mean "law, reason, proof, argument; what is correct, right, fit, appropriate,"[11] had been used in connection with the earliest efforts of Indian Buddhists to formulate canons of interpretation.[12] The precise enumeration of four *yukti* appears for the first time, it would seem, in the quintessentially hermeneutical scripture of the Mahāyāna, the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* (The Sūtra Which Sets Free the [Buddha's] Intention). "The principles of reason," declares the sage, "should be known to be four: the principle of dependence *(apekṣāyukti, ltos pa'i rigs pa),* the principle of efficacy *(kāryakāraṇayukti, bya ba byed pa'i rigs pa),* the principle of valid proof *(upapattisādhanayukti, 'thad pa sgrub pa'i rigs pa),* and the principle of reality *(dharmatāyukti, chos nyid kyi rigs pa).*"[13] Henceforth, this enumeration of the four principles of reason would remain a stable feature of the Indo-Tibetan scholastic tradition. The precise manner in which the four were individually defined and the manner of their interrelation were, however, subject to considerable variation. Kong-sprul's definitions relate rather closely to those given in the *Abhidharma-samuccaya* of Asaṅga and its commentaries.[14] They are as follows:

1. The first is dependent production. It is a principle of reason that in dependence upon the seed the shoot emerges. It is a principle of reason that in dependence upon unknowing *(ma rig pa)* existence-factors *('du byed)* and the other [links in the chain of] dependent origination *(rten 'brel)* emerge. It is a principle of reason that visual consciousness does not emerge by itself *(rang bzhin mi 'byung gi),* but that in dependence upon both the ocular faculty and form as an object it emerges. Such are [examples of] the principle of dependence.

2. The sense faculty, object and consciousness, and so forth act to effect the apprehension of the proper object [of the sense consciousness in question], but do not so effect [apprehension of] other meaningful forms *(don).* It is a principle of reason that when visual consciousness occurs it effects vision directed upon form, but it is not fit *(mi 'os pa)* to hear sound. And the ocular faculty can effect the production of visual consciousness but

cannot produce auditory or other consciousness. Further, it is a principle of reason that a barleycorn produces barley, but it is not a principle of reason for buckwheat, peas, and so forth to be born [from it]. Such is the principle of efficacy.

3. The logic of inference is exemplified by knowing from smoke that there is fire and by recognizing the presence of water from moisture. The logic of direct perception is [exemplified by] the six consciousnesses and the yogin's spiritual vision *(rnal 'byor pa'i sems kyis mthong ba).* The infallible utterances enunciated by the Buddha constitute scriptural authority *(lung).* These form the principle of logic *(tshad ma'i rigs pa),* or the principle of valid proof.

4. It is a principle of reason that water falls downward and not a principle of reason that it falls upward. [The principle here considered] also includes generic properties *(chos spyi)* and individuating characteristics *(rang gi mtshan nyid),* such as the sun's rising in the east, the solidity of earth, the wetness of water, the heat of fire and the motility of air, as well as emptiness and absence of self. These, which are well known as thus abiding by their own natures from all eternity *(thog ma med pa'i dus nas),* are the principle of reality.[15]

The Tibetan *rigs pa,* like its Sanskrit counterpart *yukti,* is a term whose reference may be either extramental or psychological—note the analogy to the English *reason,* when taken to include, for example, "the reason it happened" as well as "his reason for doing it." In passages such as the one given here, it thus appears possible to propose two main approaches to the interpretation of the doctrine: either it may be taken to be a doctrine of natural fitness, that is, one which holds that the world is such that it is in some sense fitting and correct that, for instance, shoots come from seeds and inferences allow us to know certain things; or, to adopt a Kantian tack, it may be a way of describing the a priori conditions for knowledge, such that, for example, it is reasonable to maintain that *x* causes *y* just because we can know the event at hand under no other description than a causal one. I do not believe that Kong-sprul's discussion of the four principles is formulated with sufficient precision to permit an exact determination here. Some clarification will be forthcoming below, especially when we consider Mi-pham's treatment of the principle of reality. But I must confess that this is one of several questions that may be raised in connection with the four principles of reason, for which I have no fully satisfactory answers at the present time.

It should be noted, too, that the four principles of reason differ from the other three groups of rules of thumb listed above in that they are not ostensibly rules for the interpretation of scripture. Kong-sprul tells us nothing regarding their actual role in scriptural interpretation. We must wonder: can their occurrence here be merely a classificatory accident?[16]

Mi-pham's Theory: Sources

Mi-pham sketched out his theory of interpretation in two works: (1) a short verse tract entitled *The Sword of Discernment: An Ascertainment of Meaning (Don rnam par nges pa shes rab ral gri),* written in 1885, his fortieth year;[17] and (2) in the final section of his *Introduction to Scholarship (Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo),* a lengthy scholastic manual intended for more or less elementary instruction, composed in 1900.[18] The four principles of reason, the foundation of his approach, he also treated at some length in his mammoth commentary on the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (The Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras), his last great exegetical work, written in 1911, the year preceding his decease.[19] This last mentioned, being to a great extent dependent on the commentary of Sthīramati[20] and composed primarily to facilitate our understanding of the root-text, does not contribute much to our knowledge of Mi-pham's own theory. It is clear that his conception of the four principles of reason attained much of its final form with his composition of *The Sword of Discernment,* for the exposition in the *Introduction to Scholarship* is little more than a prose restatement of the contents of the former work. Hence, in what follows, my primary aim will be to offer an account of the theory developed in *The Sword of Discernment,* drawing on the *Introduction to Scholarship* and, where relevant, others among Mi-pham's writings, only in order to clarify and fill out the argument. I have also made free use of Mi-pham's own annotations on *The Sword of Discernment,*[21] and of Mkhan-po Nus-ldan's on the *Introduction to Scholarship.*[22] The outline to be followed here is based on the one formulated by Mi-pham himself for the *Introduction to Scholarship,*[23] which is followed, too, by Mkhan-po Nus-ldan. While adhering as closely as possible to the actual words of these texts, I do not offer here a translation, but rather a paraphrase, with occasional digressions and insertions for which I alone am responsible (but which, I believe, are in no case inappropriate or misleading). Of course, it will not be possible in this summary to present and analyze each and every important concept and argument presupposed. My presentation must thus be somewhat elliptical, as is Mi-pham's own.

Mi-pham's Theory: Exposition

1.0. The teaching of the Buddha is profound and vast *(zab cing rgya che),* and therefore hard to understand *(rtogs dka' ba).* Those who wish to savor its meaning require intellectual illumination, which *The Sword of Discernment* is intended to provide.

The Buddha's entire teaching, in all its many dimensions, can be subsumed under two fundamental categories: that teaching which is

consistent with the mundane truth which conceals reality *('jig rten kun rdzob kyi bden pa);* and that which reveals the absolutely valuable truth which is reality *(dam pa'i don gyi bden pa).* These two categories are the domains of two fundamental "logics of investigation" *(dpyod pa'i tshad ma),* which are directed upon the two truths respectively. These in turn are wholly subsumed by the four principles of reason.

1.1. *The Principles of Efficacy and Dependence*

Whatever appears in the world comes into being through some cause, this being expressed in the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination *(pratītyasamutpāda, rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba).* Nothing appears independent of its proper causal nexus *(rgyu yi tshogs pa):* lotuses do not merely blossom in space. When a causal nexus is complete it effects the production of its proper result—this is the principle of efficacy. Conversely, whatever is by nature an effect depends upon its proper causal nexus—this is the principle of dependence. The two, of course, are not equivalent: they do not entail that all causes are themselves effects, nor that all effects be causes. We can restate these two principles in the simplest of terms:

1. Principle of efficacy: every cause has an effect.
   $(x)(x \text{ is a cause} \supset (\exists y)(x \text{ causes } y))$.
2. Principle of dependence: every effect has a cause.
   $(x)(x \text{ is an effect} \supset (\exists y)(y \text{ causes } x))$.

We will simply assume for the moment that we understand what it means to be a cause, to be an effect, and to cause. Indeed, we function quite adequately in our daily lives without questioning these assumptions. It is the functional utility of these concepts, in fact, that characterizes them as belonging to the logic of the truth which conceals reality.[24] It is on this basis that we undertake or desist from actions in the world, and here we find the root of our technologies, arts, and other branches of learning. That is to say, all practical endeavor is grounded only in our knowledge of the positive and negative contingencies of things *(sthānāsthāna, gnas dang gnas ma yin pa).*[25]

1.2. *The Principle of Reality*

1.2.0. Mi-pham, it will be remarked, has altered the canonical sequence of the four principles of reason. The principle of valid proof, originally and throughout much of the later scholastic tradition third in the list, has traded places with the principle of reality. In this Mi-pham is following the eleventh-century Rnying-ma-pa master Rong-zom Chos-kyi bzang-po,[26] though the arrangements found in both the

Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra and Candragomin's *Nyāyālokasiddhi* offer precedents as well.[27] The motive underlying the change of order will become clear below. Mi-pham's discussion divides the principle of reality into two subsections, corresponding to the two truths, viz. conventional reality *(tha snyad kyi chos nyid)* and absolutely valuable reality *(don dam pa'i chos nyid)*.

1.2.1. Conventionally all things, according to their particular essences *(rang rang gi ngo bo nyid kyis)*, possess specific individuating characteristics *(rang mtshan)* and possess, too, the generic characteristics *(spyi mtshan)* of the classes to which they belong. Inclusion *(sgrub)* and exclusion *(sel)* determine for any given entity limitlessly many attributes. One way of categorizing these with respect to meaningful forms that are directly apprehended *(mngon sum gyis yongs gzung don)* is to speak of the opposition of substance *(rdzas)* and attribute *(ldog)*. The former, as the unique locus of its specific individuating characteristics is a concretum *(rdzas yod)*, whose apprehension is nonconceptual *(rtog med)*. The latter, attributed to the object in question by a conceptualizing agent *(rtog bcas yid)* which "divides and combines" *(phye zhing sbyor)*,[28] is both a generic characteristic and abstractum *(btags yod)*. The categories thus elaborated may be multiplied manyfold. Inasmuch as they are conventionally adequate *(tha snyad don mthun)* they unquestionably correspond to reality.

In addition to the categories of substance and attribute, individuating and generic characteristic, concretum and abstractum, which Mi-pham explicitly assigns to conventional reality, his tradition maintains that, for example, what we would term necessary truths are to be classed here as well.[29] The conventional aspect of the principle of reality further plays a foundational role with respect to the concept of causality, as will be indicated below (in paragraph 1.2.3.).

1.2.2. The principles of efficacy, dependence, and reality, as introduced thus far, are all principles belonging to the conventional logic of investigation. The absolute logic of investigation is presented as a second aspect of the principle of reality, but all three of the principles introduced up until now are brought into play again at this juncture.

So far we have taken the concepts of cause, effect, and individual essence as primitives upon which we actually rely in our daily lives, even if we are at a loss to explain them. The "great arguments" *(gtan tshigs chen mo)* of the Madhyamaka[30] are now called upon to demonstrate that there is no causal agent which acts to generate the result,[31] that results do not come to be depending upon such causal agents,[32] and that individual essences are merely convenient fictions.[33] The three gates to liberation *(rnam thar sgo gsum)* are thus thrown open: causes stripped of efficacy are unmarked *(mtshan ma med pa)*; results that are not dependent entities can no longer be objects of expectation *(smon pa med pa)*; and

reality itself cannot be hypostatized through such fancies as individual essence *(ngo bo nyid med pa).*[34]

1.2.3. Returning now to the domain of convention, efficacy and dependence are actual features of the conventional reality of beings *(tha snyad kyi dngos po'i chos nyid).* So, for instance, fire is essentially warm—it is the very nature of the thing to be so. But it is equally the nature of fire to effect the state of being burnt and to depend upon fuel for its own being. Hence, the principles of reason find their limit *(mtha')* in the principle of reality. We cannot ask *why* fire is hot, burns, or depends upon fuel. Such is the way of reality. To seek for further reasons is futile.[35]

It should now be clear that the principle of reality will not permit the sort of very simple formulation advanced above for the principles of efficacy and dependence. It does seem possible, though, to suggest a tentative statement outlining an approach to its precise formulation. Let us assume that for all *x*, where *x* is an individual, fact, or state of affairs, there is some (possibly infinite) set of individuating and generic properties $\{P_1, P_2, \ldots P_n \ldots\}$, such that being *x* entails instantiating all and only $\{P_1, P_2, \ldots P_n \ldots\}$. Let us call $\{P_1, P_2, \ldots P_n \ldots\}$ "the complete concept of *x*," and further assume that the complete concept of *x* will include as a subset the causal properties of *x*, viz. those which are subsumed in the principles of efficacy and dependence. We may assert, then, that a complete definition (or analysis or explanation) of *x* is one in which the properties entailed by those mentioned in the *definiens* (or *analysans* or *explanans*) are all and only those that are constitutive of the complete concept of *x*. The conventional aspect of the principle of reality, taken metaphysically, would amount to the principle that the reality of a thing is exhausted in its complete concept; and, taken epistemologically, it would amount to the assertion that a thing is known when one attributes to it some set of properties that constitute a complete definition of that very thing. The absolute aspect of the principle of reality would then be a negative thesis to the effect that the complete concept of a thing neither involves, nor entails, the intrinsic being of that thing. (This formulation can apply only to the absolute *qua* denotation, on which see paragraph 1.3.3 below.)

1.2.4. Thus, we see that Mi-pham subsumes the two logics of investigation within the three principles of reason considered so far; and these he subsumes within the single principle of reality. The metaphysical character of these principles and also their role in the guidance of thought he affirms in these words:

> Because it is appropriate *('os)* and reasonable *(rigs pa nyid)* that the nature of things which are objects of knowledge should so abide, one speaks of

"principles of reason." Or, one speaks of "principles of reason" with reference to judgment that accords with that *(de dang mthun par gzhal ba).*[36]

1.3. *The Principle of Valid Proof*

1.3.0. Having grouped together the principles of efficacy, dependence, and reality as fundamentally metaphysical principles, which pertain by extension to the adequate judgment, Mi-pham turns to treat the remaining principle of reason. From the *Saṃdhinirmocana* onward this principle had always been taken to subsume the topics dealt with in Buddhist logic and epistemology *(pramāṇa, tshad ma),*[37] and so Mi-pham accordingly elaborates here a terse, but remarkably complete, treatise on this subject. As we shall see below, there is a clear sense in which Buddhist logic is essentially hermeneutical. As a result it is impossible to cut material from Mi-pham's presentation without losing much that is important for his theory as a whole. At the same time, limitations of space require that rather severe abridgments be made at this point. So I will have to assume that readers presuppose here the inclusion of the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti theory of direct perception *(pratyakṣa, mngon sum),* inference *(svārthānumāna, rang don rjes dpag),* and argument *(parārthānumāna, gzhan don rjes dpag).*[38] The remarks which follow (in paragraphs 1.3.1–4) are intended only to indicate some interesting points of emphasis in Mi-pham's discussion.

1.3.1. If the determinations *(sgro 'dogs gcod pa)* made with respect to one's own mental states *(rang sems)* were similar to those made with respect to physical forms experienced through direct perception, there would be another awareness of that, *ad indefinitum.* Therefore, self-reference must be distinguished from awareness cognizing an object. This self-clarification *(rang gsal)* is self-presenting awareness *(rang rig).* All that is experienced through other modes of direct perception is ascertained *as* direct perception through self-presentation. If that were not the case, direct perception would in effect be epistemically unfounded *('grub mi 'gyur te).* Inference is rooted in direct perception. Direct perception is made certain by self-presentation. After arriving at this, the experience of one's own mind, with respect to which there can be no error *(ma 'khrul blo yi nyams myong),* there can be no further proof *(sgrub byed).*[39]

1.3.2. Having grasped objects as general objectives *(don spyi),* one associates them with words and they become conceptualized *(ming dang bsres te rtog byed);* conceptual thought then multiplies various conventions. Even among persons who do not know the signs (e.g. preverbal infants), it is the general objective that appears to the mind. Through concepts which are possibly such as to be associated with words *(ming dang 'dres rung rtog pa),* they enter into or desist from actions with respect

to objects. Without the conceptualizing intellect, there could be no conventions of refutation and proof, and so none of the topics of inference and learning could be communicated. Concepts permit us to ponder and to undertake future objectives, and so forth, even though these are not directly evident.[40] If there were no inferences, which involve concepts, everything would be as if one were just born. (That Mi-pham, as a representative of a spiritual tradition that places much emphasis on the transcendence of conceptual states of mind, insists here on the value of conceptual processes is illuminating. His exposition reveals that the nonconceptual intuition to which the Buddhist practitioner aspires cannot be correctly regarded as a regression into preconceptual chaos.)

1.3.3. In *The Sword of Discernment,* but not the *Introduction to Scholarship,* Mi-pham introduces a way of subdividing the two logics of investigation, conventional and absolute, that is worth noting owing to the emphasis he placed upon it in other works,[41] and the emphasis placed upon it by his successors.[42] The conventional is divided into an impure realm of what is perceived as being on hand in the ordinary world *(ma dag tshu rol mthong ba)* and a pure realm of supramundane visionary experience *(dag pa'i gzigs snang).* The absolute is divided into the absolute *qua* denotation *(rnam grangs kyi don dam)* and the absolute *qua* undenotable *(rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam).*[43] The former division is required in order that our logic and epistemology be rich enough to embrace both mundane *and* visionary experience, and their objects, without reducing one to the other (as our behaviorists do when they attempt to describe, e.g., the believer's sense of divine presence). The latter division prevents us from confusing discourse about the absolute with its ineffable realization, in which the dichotomy of the two truths is transcended in their coalescence. This realization may be spoken of as the sole truth of nirvāṇa. The pristine cognition *(ye shes)* of enlightenment and its embodiment *(sku)* here converge: the noetic agent *(shes byed)* and its object *(shes bya)* are undivided.

1.3.4. It may be objected that, because the first three principles of reason already subsume the categories which apply to our understanding of the world and the arguments which conduce to receptivity to absolute value, the elaboration of this last principle of reason is quite unnecessary, being largely redundant. In replying to this Mi-pham asks that we consider two ways in which the objection might be construed. First, it may be taken as asserting that we do not need to be epistemologists in order to know, that we need not have studied formal logic in order to reason correctly. This, of course, is perfectly true, but it does not establish any redundancy here. The objection thus taken involves a confusion between the act of knowing and the inquiry into what it is to know, the act of inferring and the study of the principles of sound argu-

ment.[44] Alternatively, the objector may be suggesting that our foregoing consideration of the absolute should have already led us to conclude that the distinctions made here are not ultimately valid, and so should be dispensed with even conventionally. But this leads to great absurdity: even in our daily affairs we would then be incapable of distinguishing between a thing and its opposite. For one who has been in this manner misled by the notion of absolute realization—a realization in which all affirmation and denial have been utterly transcended—so that he now *affirms* utter nonsense, the principle of valid reason should be hardly considered unnecessary.

1.4. *The Four Orientations*

1.4.0. When one has achieved certainty with respect to the two truths by means of the four modes of reasoning, that is, has freed one's intellect from ignorance *(ma rtogs),* misunderstanding *(log rtogs),* and doubt *(the tshom),* four changes of orientation are automatically realized *(shugs kyis 'byung)* with respect to the intention of the Buddha's doctrine. That is to say, the philosophical insight previously cultivated has now contributed to the formation of a preunderstanding that is appropriate to the task of correctly interpreting the Tathāgata's liberating message.

1.4.1. One orients oneself to the dharma, and not to persons *(gang zag la mi rton, chos la rton).* For it is the path which liberates, not its propounder. The latter may appear in any guise: it is taught that the Sugata himself, for example, according to the requirements of those to be trained, once emanated as a butcher. And even if he who propounds the doctrine appears to be otherwise excellent, it is of no benefit if the content of his teaching contradicts the Mahāyāna: Māra, for instance, emanated in the guise of the Buddha.

1.4.2. Having oriented oneself to the dharma, one orients oneself to its content, and not to its verbal conventions *(tshig la mi rton, don la rton).* Because the motivation for utterance *(brjod 'dod)* is to convey some content, then, so long as a given concatenation of signs gives rise to such understanding, further verbal elaboration is unnecessary: it is like seeking an ox that has been already found. There is no limit to the possible analysis of objects, and so forth, associated with even a single phrase like "Fetch the wood!" But if the utterance of that phrase alone permits of understanding, then the purpose of the verbalization is exhausted.

1.4.3. In penetrating the content, having come to know provisional meaning and definitive meaning, one orients oneself to definitive meaning, and not to provisional meaning *(drang don la mi rton, nges don la rton).* The omniscient one taught the sequence of vehicles as the rungs of a ladder in accord with the predispositions, faculties, and attitudes of his disciples. There are statements which he has purposefully made with an

intention *(dgongs pa)* directed to a given intended stratum of meaning *(dgongs gzhi),* but which a critical analysis calls into question if taken literally *(sgra ji bzhin pa).* These are exemplified by the four special intentions and four hidden intentions. Thus, regarding the four philosophical systems and the culminating Vajrayāna, that part of the teaching not clearly disclosed in a lower system is elucidated by a higher one. It is by seeing what both accords with scripture and is proven by reason that one grasps definitive meaning. In the case of the Vajrayāna, whose teachings are "sealed" by the six parameters and four modes, reason can establish the intended content only in association with the precepts transmitted by the appropriate lineage.[45]

1.4.4. If one is to assimilate the definitive meaning of the doctrine, then one must orient oneself to nondual pristine cognition, and not to (mundane) consciousness *(rnam shes la mi rton, ye shes la rton).* The latter is that mind which apprehends objects *(gzung 'dzin sems),* and is entangled in word and concept *(sgra rtog rjes 'brangs).* That mind's very being is objectification *(dmigs pa can gyi bdag nyid),* which is embodied in the dichotomy of apprehended objects and the apprehensions of them, acts which are all nonveridical *(rdzun)*[46] and so cannot touch reality. Attitudes which objectify may grasp their objects as beings *(dngos por dmigs),* nonbeings *(dngos med dmigs),* the conjunction of being and nonbeing *(dngos dngos med gnyis su dmigs),* or the negation of both being and nonbeing *(gnyis med dmigs).*[47] But these objectifications are all equally said to be "Māra's range of activity" *(bdud gyi spyod yul).*[48] The process of objectification is not terminated by refutation or proof; for only when one sees what is as it is, without refutation or proof, is one freed.[49] Released from all apprehended objects and apprehensions, self-emergent and self-luminous, pristine cognition unfolds.

1.5. *The Eight Treasures of Brilliance*

The realization of immediate insight into the nature of reality brings with it the emergence of spiritual faculties that contribute to a profound ability to convey to others the significance of the Buddha's message. These faculties are spoken of in the *Lalitavistarasūtra*[50] as "treasures of brilliance" *(spobs pa'i gter),* and are said to be eight in number: (1) the treasure of mindfulness, so that forgetfulness is overcome; (2) the treasure of intellect, whereby one remains critical; (3) the treasure of realization, which is here specifically the comprehension of the entire corpus of Buddhist scripture; (4) the treasure of retention, which is distinguished from mindfulness in that retention has as its specific objects the topics of formal study; (5) the treasure of brilliance, here the ability to satisfy the needs of others by means of eloquent speech; (6) the treasure of dharma, whereby one acts to preserve the doctrine; (7) the treasure of

an enlightened spirit, so that one maintains a constant affinity with the three jewels of the Buddhist religion; and (8) the treasure of actual attainment, for one is now fully receptive to unborn reality. Endowed with these treasures one upholds the doctrine, reveals to others what is to be undertaken and what is to be abandoned, and in the end one comes to realize for oneself the enlightenment of a Buddha.

Some Contemporary Reflections

We began this inquiry considering Buddhist hermeneutics to be the explicit theory guiding Buddhist scriptural interpretation, and we have followed its course as it has merged with Buddhist philosophy as a general theory of exegesis and practice. Turning now to our western traditions of hermeneutical thought, what might be derived from their juxtaposition with Mi-pham's contribution? A comprehensive answer to this question cannot be hastily formulated. I will content myself to consider briefly two related problems that have come to my attention in the course of this research. These concern the dichotomy of explanation and understanding, and the conflict of fundamentally ontological with fundamentally epistemological orientations. Mi-pham, of course, knew nothing of western philosophy. I therefore make no claim to represent here the manner in which he might have treated these issues in their contemporary context.

Hermeneutical philosophy since Dilthey has generally affirmed there to be two distinct scientific methodologies: a methodology of *explanation* which is appropriate to the natural sciences, and a methodology of *understanding (Verstehen)* which is appropriate to the human sciences. This was advocated against the view of the positivist tradition, which maintained that the methods of the human sciences could be reduced to those of the natural sciences. In recent philosophy this monomethodological view has been powerfully asserted in Hempel's covering law theory,[51] which has occasioned a debate within the analytic tradition through the challenges framed by disciples of Wittgenstein such as Anscombe and von Wright.[52] The last mentioned, in particular, has explicitly related his own insistence upon an irreducible distinction of "two great process categories"—causation and intentional agency, which are respectively the objects of the operations known as explanation and understanding—to the work of thinkers associated with the continental hermeneutical tradition. At the same time, philosophers within the hermeneutical tradition, especially Ricoeur, and within the analytic tradition, such as Davidson and Searle, have in various ways questioned the validity of the distinction, though without wishing to resurrect Hempel's program in its particulars.[53] The controversy thus bridges the gulf between two

major philosophical traditions which until very recently seemed to be incapable of constructive interaction. Let us now inquire into the manner in which the dispute reflects upon certain features of Mi-pham's thought.

We are concerned here, of course, with the principles of efficacy and dependence, especially in the light of Mi-pham's assertion that these are the basis for our undertaking or desisting from actions in the world. This suggests that Mi-pham would have denied that there is any absolute gulf separating the realm of intentional undertaking from that of causation. It thus appears *prima facie* that his thought is in conflict with the views of those who insist on a thoroughgoing dualism here. Does this point up a fundamental defect in Mi-pham's system?

Before we can answer this question, we should note that many of the contemporary causalists have conceded a major point to philosophers such as von Wright: they have abandoned the program of the logical positivists to rely on causality to explain away the intentional features of human action. But they insist that intentional attitudes may themselves function causally. This von Wright, for instance, would deny. I believe Buddhist thought in general, and Mi-pham in particular, would support some version of the causalist approach to the problem. In his treatment elsewhere of the fundamental doctrine of dependent origination *(pratītya-samutpāda, rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba),* Mi-pham recalls the distinction between an *inner causality (nang gi rten 'brel)* and an *outer causality (phyi yi rten 'brel).*[54] The former is embodied in the traditional Buddhist scheme of the twelve links of dependent origination, beginning with ignorance and ending in old age and death, and the latter describes natural processes such as the growth of a plant from the seed. I take this distinction to be at least analogous to von Wright's distinction between two great process categories. But, Mi-pham, like Davidson, parts company from von Wright by maintaining both processes to be causal, though it is important to note that this is established without seeking to reduce one category to the other. A detailed analysis of the relevant Buddhist doctrines in Mi-pham's formulation of them cannot be undertaken here. Suffice it to say, however, that in the absence of such an undertaking it is by no means obvious that Buddhist thought is lacking in the conceptual richness required to deal adequately with the conflicting claims of causation and agency. If Mi-pham's theory is defective at this point (as it may yet prove to be), more than a general objection to causalism will be necessary to show wherein a supposed fault may lie.

With regard to the problem of the conflict between ontological and epistemological orientations, it may be said that western philosophy since Kant has moved between two poles, which assert respectively the primacy of being and, in line with Kant's "Copernican revolution," the

primacy of knowing. The distinction complements, in some respects, that which obtains with respect to the two process categories. When we emphasize an epistemological and agent-centered orientation to the exclusion of the ontological and causalist, we tend toward idealism; and when we adopt an opposite orientation, we swing in the direction of positivism. And other orientations have also been realized with respect to these fundamental divisions. But this problem of conflicting orientations does not seem to exist for Mi-pham. In the following brief remarks I will offer one explanation for this, without committing myself to any opinion on its implications for contemporary western philosophical investigations.

Mi-pham's most novel contribution to the discussion of the four principles of reason was his reduction of the principles of efficacy and dependence to that of reality. As we have seen, this is where why-questions must reach their end. At the same time, in elaborating the principle of valid proof, he sought the ultimate foundations for his epistemology in the phenomenon of self-presentation. We thus have two fundamental grounds, the first of which is ontological and the second epistemological. What I wish to suggest here is that no tension arises between them because Mi-pham never seeks to reduce one to the other, but rather holds that without such reduction the two foundations nonetheless converge. That they do so ultimately is, of course, entailed by Mi-pham's conception of the absolute as involving the coalescence of noetic agent and object. But it is significant, too, that even within the domain of convention they are not to be thought of as being wholly disparate.[55] For self-presentation confronts us in all our conscious moments with the unity of being and knowing. How does being in pain allow me to know that I am in pain? It just does. No further answer is required. Being and knowing are here no different. And it is characteristic of Rnying-ma-pa thought to find in our ordinary states of awareness *(rig pa)* a subtle but abiding link with the ineffable truth of enlightenment.

Buddhism as a Hermeneutical Endeavor

Mi-pham's theory of interpretation clearly ramifies beyond the apparent limits of scriptural interpretation plain and simple. In concluding this presentation of it, I wish to consider a few of the implications of Mi-pham's work for our general conception of Buddhist hermeneutics.

It will be observed that Mi-pham's discussion is divided into three main phases. First, the four principles of reason are taught so that we might comprehend the fundamental doctrine of Mahāyāna metaphysics, namely that of the two truths. Armed with this insight we set out to transform certain basic orientations in the second phase. And finally,

realizing the fruit of this transformation, we gain the endowment of the eight treasures of brilliance. This seems to bear more than accidental resemblance to the systematic teaching of the doctrine according to the categories of ground *(gzhi)*, path *(lam)*, and result *('bras-bu)*. Let us note, however, that with the sole exception of the eight treasures all the major categories employed by Mi-pham are those expounded in the earlier scholastic tradition in particular association with the problems of textual interpretation. It thus would seem to be the case that for Mi-pham the principles of interpretation are really no different from the principles of Buddhist philosophy overall. I believe that this is as it should be.[56]

Vasubandhu, in a frequently cited verse, divided the teaching into the two great domains of transmitted doctrine *(āgama)* and realization *(adhigama)*. No English translation can convey the resonance of these technical terms, which are both derived from the same Sanskrit root. (In Tibetan, too, this is lost.) Perhaps we can suggest it by saying that the transmitted doctrine is that which *comes down* to us, while realization is that which *comes through* when the transmission is rightly understood. Vasubandhu associated these two domains with two sorts of spiritually meaningful activity: exegesis and practice. Jointly, they guarantee the continuing integrity of the Buddha's teaching in the world. Now, what I wish to propose here is that we regard both of these activities to be fundamentally interpretive. In the first, receptivity and acumen must open us to the descent of the teaching, for that only occurs when we are capable of understanding the Buddha's intention. In the second, we similarly open ourselves to the realization of reality *qua* absolute value, for that cannot come through to us until we comprehend the real order of things. Clearly a Buddhist theory of interpretation must in the final analysis embrace both domains, for it is through the interpretive act that scripture on the one hand and reality on the other are in fact comprehended.

In developing Buddhist theory of interpretation in this manner Mi-pham was not, of course, undertaking a radical program; he was no revolutionary breaking with tradition in order to explore previously undiscovered pathways in Buddhist thought. Like most Buddhist philosophers, he was engaged in the ongoing process of unpacking the contents of the received tradition. The very inclusion of the four principles of reason among the rules of thumb for interpretation was already indicative of the inseparability of Buddhist hermeneutics from Buddhist logic and metaphysics.[57] The hermeneutical character of the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti system, too, had been clearly enunciated long before Mi-pham's time, for example by Karma-pa VII Chos-grags rgya-mtsho (1454–1506), who introduced his monumental exposition of that system with these words:

> The Buddha, that transcendent lord, who embodies logic . . . set in motion the wheel of the doctrine which is infallible with respect to both provisional and ultimate meaning, so that the genuinely significant, which had been previously unknown, might be clearly known without error. And that [doctrine], according to the faculties of individual disciples, abides in various forms, to whit, provisional meaning, definitive meaning, literal, metaphorical, having special intention, and having a hidden intention. Seeing that its meaning is thus hard for disciples to understand, that great soul Dignāga well established all the scriptures of the Sugata by means of three logics, so that they could be easily understood through the science of logical argument, and so that ignorance, misunderstanding, doubt, and so forth might be removed.[58]

It will not be possible to explore this theme in greater detail here. It will be enough to affirm that there is a fundamental sense in which Buddha-dharma is a hermeneutical endeavor and that this is revealed certainly in our consideration of Mi-pham. Buddhism is hermeneutical in that it demands that we confront and come to understand the message of the Sugata; it is hermeneutical in that it requires a reinterpretation of the world within which we find ourselves and equally a redefinition of ourselves within that world; and it is hermeneutical in that it will not allow us to remain silent, but demands that we enunciate, that is, interpret for others, the message and the reality with which we have struggled.

Notes

I am grateful to several individuals for advice and criticism in connection with this research. The topic for this paper was suggested, and the relevant writings of Mi-pham brought to my attention, by Mkhan-po Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin Rin-po-che of Ser-lo dgon-pa, Nepal. Mkhan-po Dpal-ldan shes-rab, currently residing in New York City, indicated to me the important contributions of Candragomin and Rong-zom-pa, and their influence on Mi-pham and the later adherents of his school. The participants in the Buddhist Hermeneutics conference all must be acknowledged for the stimulus they provided. Among them, I wish to thank Michael Broido, Luis Gómez, Jeffrey Hopkins, and Tom Kasulis in particular for their generous comments on specific issues raised here. I am indebted, too, to Professor Philip Quinn, Department of Philosophy, Notre Dame University, for his indications regarding the philosophical content of several passages.

1. For a useful introduction to the life and contributions of this master, see Steven D. Goodman, "Mi-pham rgya-mtsho: an account of his life, the printing of his works, and the structure of his treatise entitled *Mkhas-pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo*," in Ronald M. Davidson, ed., *Wind Horse,* vol. 1 (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1981), 58–78.

2. The circularity that seems to me to be problematic here is not a feature of the so-called hermeneutic circle in general. According to Dilthey's conception of the latter, the interpreter is not expected to (and indeed cannot) exclude as

irrelevant all elements of his preunderstanding which have their origins outside the particular text under consideration. The concept of the hermeneutic circle tells us that we cannot understand the text without already understanding the text *in part*. But the circularity to which I here object arises when we insist that to understand the text we must refer only to the text, and nothing more.

3. My reservations with respect to implicit hermeneutics stem from the following considerations: Let us suppose that an individual *a* has interpreted a text *b* and that his interpretation is represented by some body of conclusions *C*. Let us further suppose that there is some theory *T* such that if *b* is read in the light of *T* one would conclude *C*. These suppositions *do not* jointly entail *a*'s having interpreted *b* in the light of *T*. Given these bare bones there is in fact *nothing whatsoever* that can be said of *a*'s implicit hermeneutic. These considerations notwithstanding, I do not disagree with Robert Gimello and David Tracy in their insistence that Buddhist hermeneutics will often require our extending our inquiry to implicit principles of interpretation if we are to investigate Buddhist hermeneutics at all. In such instances we will, of course, have more than bare bones upon which to base our hypotheses. Lest there be some misunderstanding about this, my point here is simply to indicate something of the theoretical limits of this process, and to define my own investigations in terms of those limits.

4. Kong-sprul and Mi-pham were among the closest disciple-colleagues of nineteenth-century Tibet's greatest visionary, 'Jam-dbyangs Mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po (1820–1892). The best survey to date of these masters and their intellectual and spiritual milieu remains E. Gene Smith's introduction to Lokesh Chandra, ed., *Kongtrul's Encyclopedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1970). Kong-sprul was, in fact, one of Mi-pham's teachers, but available information on his instruction to him leaves unclear whether he influenced Mi-pham with respect to the present subject matter. On their relationship see Bdud-'joms Rin-po-che 'Jigs-bral-ye-shes-rdo-rje, *Gangs ljongs rgyal bstan yongs kyi phyi mo rnga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa'i bstan pa rin po che ji ltar byung ba'i tshul dag cing gsal bar brjod pa lha dbang gYul las rgyal ba'i rnga bo che'i sgra dbyangs*, in *Collected Writings and Revelations of Bdud-'joms Rin-po-che*, vol. 1 (Delhi, 1979), 697. Translated in G. Dorje and M. Kapstein, *Fundamentals and History of the Nyingmapa Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Wisdom Publications, forthcoming).

5. The original Dpal-spungs edition of this work is reproduced in Lokesh Chandra, *Kongtrul's Encyclopedia*. Citations in the present paper, however, refer to Kong-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (Blo-gros mtha'-yas), *Shes bya kun khyab*, 3 vols. (Beijing: Minorities Press, 1982).

6. It is this aspect of Tibetan hermeneutics that has perhaps received the most attention from Tibetan thinkers themselves, e.g., in Tsong-kha-pa's *tour de force*, the *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, a complete translation of which is now available in Robert Thurman, *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

7. Among recent contributions see, for example, Kennard Lipman, "*Nītārtha, Neyārtha*, and *Tathāgatagarbha* in Tibet," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 8 (1980): 87–95; Robert A. F. Thurman, "Buddhist Hermeneutics," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 46 (1): 19–39; and Michael M. Broido, "Abhiprāya and Implication in Tibetan Linguistics," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 12 (1984): 1–33.

8. See especially the contributions of Broido and Thurman to the present volume and the references therein.

9. Cf. Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 14: "The limitation of the pre-Schleiermacher effort consisted . . . in the lack of reflection that transcended merely methodological considerations—which themselves did not reach any systematic formulation and remained on the level of ad hoc insights that were forthcoming from interpretative practice."

10. S. Bagchi, ed., *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra,* Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 13 (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1970), xix.45d. Elsewhere the Sanskrit phrase is *catasro yuktayaḥ;* e.g., Nathmal Tatia, ed., *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣyam* (Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1976), p. 99, no. 125.

11. Cf. Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), 853.

12. The Pali equivalent *yutti* represents a basic category of scriptural analysis in both the *Nettipakaraṇaṃ* and the *Peṭakopadesa.* See Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Guide* (London: Luzac and Company, 1962), 36ff.; and idem., *The Pitaka-Disclosure* (London: Luzac and Company, 1965), 116ff. *Yutti* is here translated as "a construing." I am grateful to George Bond for calling these sources to my attention through his presentation to the conference on Buddhist hermeneutics. Cf., also, the concept of *yukti* as it occurs in the *Tattvārtha* chapter of the *Bodhisattvabhūmiḥ,* edited by Nalinaksha Dutt (Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1978), 25ff.; and the translation by Janice Dean Willis, *On Knowing Reality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 150.

13. Étienne Lamotte, *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra: L'Explication des Mystères* (Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1935), chap. 10, 7.4. 7° (text and translation). Lamotte mistook *rigs pa* in this context to be a translation of the Sanskrit term *nyāya* rather than *yukti.* His attempt to translate the lengthy and difficult passage which adumbrates the four principles of reason he qualifies with these words: "Cet exposé de logique bouddhique étant très special, nous avons cru bien faire de conserver les termes techniques sanscrits dans notre traductions." The present writer has made a new translation of the entire passage, and intends to include it with other materials he has gathered in a forthcoming historical study of the development of the four principles.

14. Pralhad Pradhan, *Abhidharma Samuccaya of Asaṅga* (Santiniketan: Visva-Bharati, 1950), 81; Nathmal Tatia, *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣyam.* For a translation of the former see Walpola Rahula, *Le Compendium de la Super-Doctrine d'Asaṅga* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1971), 136. This, however, is seriously flawed in the passage here cited: Rahula has without explanation read *sākṣātkrīyāsādhanayukti* for Pradhan's entirely correct reading of *upapattisādhanayukti.*

15. Kong-sprul, *Shes bya kun khyab,* 3.11–12.

16. Neither do the doxographers of the other Tibetan traditions offer us much assistance at this point. For example, the Dge-lugs-pa scholar Lcang-skya Rol-pa'i rdo-rje (1717–1786), in his *Grub pa'i mtha'i rnam par bzhag pa gsal bar bshad pa thub bstan lhun po'i mdzes rgyan* (Sarnath, U.P.: The Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press, 1970), 151, says that "relying on these four principles of reason, too, one penetrates the significance of the Jina's scriptures." But this is rather uninformative.

17. *Don rnam par nges pa shes rab ral gri,* modern xylograph from Ser-lo mgon-pa, Nepal, based on the Rdzong-sar edition, 10 folios.

18. *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo* (Tashijong, H.P.: Sungrab Nyamso Gyunphel Parkhang, 1964), fols. 148b–161b. For a general introduction to this work

see Goodman, "Mi-pham rgya-mtsho"; and Leslie S. Kawamura, "An Analysis of Mi-pham's *mKhas-'jug,*" in Davidson, *Wind Horse,* 112–126.

19. *Collected Writings of 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham rgya-mtsho,* vol. A (Gangtok: Sonam Topgay Kazi, 1976), 667–668.

20. Sthīramati, *Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya,* vol. 2 (Rumtek, 1976), 403–410.

21. *Don rnam par nges pa shes rab ral gri mchan bcas,* in *Collected Writings of 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham rgya-mtsho,* vol. PA (Gangtok: Sonam Topgay Kazi, 1976), 787–820.

22. *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo'i mchan 'grel legs bshad snang ba'i 'od zer* (Delhi: Lama Jumre Drakpa, 1974), 653–694.

23. *Mkhas 'jug gi sa bcad mdor bsdus pa pad dkar phreng ba* (Tashijong, H.P.: Sungrab Nyamso Gyunphel Parkhang, 1965), 20b–22b.

24. Dharmakīrti's definition of absolute reality, i.e. efficacy, is here taken as the mark of veridical being in the domain of the concealment of the absolute. See Swami Dwarikadas Shastri, ed., *Pramāṇavārttikam* (Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1968), 100: "What is capable of effecting a result is here [defined as] absolute being." Cf., also, Esho Mikogami, "Some Remarks on the Concept Arthakriyā," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 7 (1979): 79–94.

25. Goodman, "Mi-pham rgya-mtsho," 71, translates this term as "what is possible and what is impossible"; and Kawamura, "An Analysis of Mi-pham's *mKhas-'jug,*" 114, gives "what is inevitable and what is impossible." The latter is certainly incorrect and the former somewhat inaccurately suggests that both logical and empirical possibility are to be included here. But Mi-pham himself, *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo,* 23a1 ff., makes it quite clear that this topic concerns only empirical possibility. Accordingly, "positive contingencies" *(gnas)* refers here to natural processes—e.g., a rice-stalk growing from a rice-seed—and "negative contingencies" *(gnas ma yin pa)* to empirically impossible processes—e.g., a cat growing from a rice-seed.

26. See his *Gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i tshul las snang ba lhar bsgrub pa Rong zom chos bzang gis mdzad pa,* in *Selected Writings of Roṅ-zom Chos-kyi-bzaṅ-po,* Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod, vol. 73 (Leh: S. W. Tashigangpa, 1973), 125–151.

27. The Sanskrit title of the text last mentioned is also given as *Nyāyasiddhāloka,* P 5740, translated by Śrīsiṃhaprabha and Vairocana, although it is not listed in the early ninth century *Ldan dkar dkar chag* as given by Marcelle Lalou, "Les Textes Bouddhiques au Temps du Roi Khri-sroṅ-lde-bcan," *Journal Asiatique* 241, no. 3 (1953): 313–353. The text is noted, but not analyzed, by Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana, *A History of Indian Logic* (Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass, 1971), 336. Vidyabhusana assigns the author to "about 925 A.D.," but if the attribution of translators is correct he would have been active over a century earlier.

28. Cf. the distinctions made by St. Thomas Aquinas, *Aristotle: On Interpretation,* translated by Jean T. Oesterle (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1962), 17: "There is a twofold operation of the intellect. . . . One is the understanding of simple objects, that is, the operation by which the intellect apprehends just the essence of the thing alone; the other is the operation of composing and dividing. There is also a third operation, that of reasoning, by which reason proceeds from what is known to the investigation of things that are unknown. The first of these operations is ordered to the second, for there cannot be composition and division unless things have already been apprehended simply. The second, in turn, is ordered to the third, for clearly we must proceed from some known truth to which the intellect assents in order to have certitude

about something not yet known." Cf., also, Aristotle, *De Anima,* bk. 3, chap. 6. For Mi-pham's indications concerning the passage from the operation of division and combination to that of reasoning, see below, paragraphs 1.3.1–2.

29. I am indebted to Mkhan-po Dpal-ldan shes-rab for having clarified this point. By now it will be obvious to readers familiar with recent western philosophy that "conventional" is not used here with the same meaning it has in the philosophy of science since Poincaré. For even the necessary truths of logic and mathematics, which may be known a priori, are here termed "conventional" *(sāṅketika, tha snyad pa).* But "conventional" in its Buddhist uses should not be taken to imply "freely chosen from a given set of alternatives," and much less "arbitrary." It refers, rather, to all language and propositional knowledge, and to the principles to which they conform and to their objects; for none of these is or directly points to that absolute reality whose realization is spiritual liberation. That absolute, of which not even the categories of the one and the many or of being and nonbeing can be affirmed, wholly transcends the familiar conventions of logic, experience, language, and thought.

30. For the four major arguments traditionally enumerated in the scholastic treatises of the Madhyamaka school see David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981), 112. A detailed account of their exposition according to the Dge-lugs-pa tradition is found in Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1983), pt. 2, "Reasoning into Reality." Here I follow Mi-pham's own discussion, as given in *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo,* 133b–140a. The enumeration of three arguments in the passage which follows, rather than the traditional four, is explained by the fact that the fourth, the "Great Interdependence Argument" *(rten 'brel chen po),* is held to apply equally to the analysis of cause, result, and essence.

31. The argument applied to causes, called "Diamond Fragments" *(rgyu la dpyod pa rdo rje gzegs ma),* proceeds from the assumption that if an individual thing comes into being as the result of some cause, then that cause must either be the thing itself or something other. The supposition that it is the thing itself leads to an infinite regress, whereas the assumption that the cause is other cannot be sustained owing to the absence of any intrinsic relationship between the supposed cause and its result. Having denied these two alternatives nothing is gained by supposing that their conjunction might explain causation; and their joint negation leads to the absurdity of things coming into being causelessly. The argument is intended to demonstrate that the concept of cause is radically defective, i.e. empty.

32. The reality of the result is challenged by the "negation of the coming into being of an existent or of a nonexistent" *('bras bu la dpyod pa yod med skye 'gog).* Whatever comes into being, it is supposed, must be something that exists, does not exist, conjoins existence and nonexistence, or neither exists nor does not exist. Following an argumentative strategy similar to that of the critique of cause, one is led to conclude that the concept of result (i.e. of something that is brought into being) is also defective.

33. The argument employed here intends to reduce to absurdity the notions of the one and the many *(ngo bo la dpyod pa gcig du bral),* with the result that the concept of individual essence is overthrown. As applied to material bodies the argument is similar to Kant's second antinomy. But in the case of spiritual substance it depends on the denial of the unity of consciousness, both through appeal to an assumption of temporal parts and in the light of Humean consider-

ations with respect to the variegation of consciousness. Mi-pham analyzed this argument *in extenso* in his commentary on Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṃkāra,* the *Dbu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad 'jam dbyangs bla ma dgyes pa'i zhal lung,* in *Collected Writings of 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham rgya-mtsho,* vol. 12 (Gangtok: Sonam Topgay Kazi, 1976), 1-359.

34. Cf. Étienne Lamotte, *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1962), 148 n. 16.

35. Despite the peculiarities of diction, Mi-pham's point here seems to be similar to that made by Aristotle in *Metaphysics,* bk. 7, chap. 17, 1041[a] (trans. W. D. Ross):

> Now "why a thing is itself" is a meaningless inquiry (for [to give meaning to the question "why"] the fact or the existence of the thing must already be evident—e.g. that the moon is eclipsed—but the fact that a thing is itself is the single reason and the single cause to be given in answer to all such questions as "why the man is man, or the musician musical," unless one were to answer "because each thing is inseparable from itself, and its being one just meant this" . . .).

Cf., also, *Posterior Analytics,* bk. 2, chaps. 4-7. For a recent discussion of related issues, see Harry V. Stopes-Roe's observations on "terminal quests," in his "The Intelligibility of the Universe," in Stuart C. Brown, *Reason and Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 53-67.

36. *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo,* 150a6-b2.

37. The presentation found in the *Saṃdhinirmocana* thus has the distinction of being one of the earliest Buddhist presentations of these topics. They are listed there as falling under three categories: direct perception, inference, and scriptural authority. Later Buddhist logicians tended to refrain from enumerating the last of these as a separate epistemic authority, but recall Kong-sprul's remarks above.

38. The most complete account of this system remains Theodore Stcherbatsky's dated opus, *Buddhist Logic* (reprint ed., New York: Dover, 1962), 2 vols. While there is no comprehensive bibliography for the many contributions made in recent years to the primary and secondary literature on this subject, useful lists of sources are found in Geshe Lobsang Tharchin, *The Logic and Debate Tradition of India, Tibet, and Mongolia* (Freewood Acres, N.J.: First Kalmuk Buddhist Temple, 1979), 237-270; and Ernst Steinkellner, *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇaviniścayaḥ,* Teil II—Übersetzung und Anmerkungen (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979), 10-19.

39. The issues raised in this passage are of central importance to contemporary epistemology, and require much further study in their Buddhist formulations. The epistemic primacy of self-presentation *(svasaṃvittiḥ)* was sharply contested by those within the Buddhist tradition who maintained this concept to be fundamentally incoherent, like the notion of the sword being used to cut itself. Cf. Śāntideva, *Bodhicāryāvatāra,* chap. 9, v. 18. Also problematic was the precise nature of the chain leading from discrete self-presentations through sensory perceptions to inferential knowledge of the world. For contemporary philosophical discussions of these and related questions see Roderick M. Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966). The connection between the Buddhist notion of *svasaṃvittiḥ* and recent investigations of self-presentation appears to have been first explicitly noted by Paul M. Williams, "On *rang rig,*" in Ernst Steinkellner and Helmut Tauscher, eds., *Contri-*

butions on Tibetan and Buddhist Religion and Philosophy, Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Symposium Held at Velm-Vienna (Vienna, 1983), 2:321–332. I thank Michael Broido for calling this interesting article to my attention. (Williams, it should be noted, uses "self-consciousness" where I prefer "self-presentation.")

40. One interesting question that can be raised here is whether Buddhist philosophers regarded future states of affairs as having determinate truth-value.

41. See especially his *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me,* published in a lithographic edition with the commentary of Mkhan-chen Kun-bzang dpal-ldan (Clement Town, U.P.: Nyingma Lama's College, n.d.).

42. Particularly noteworthy here is Bod-pa sprul-sku Mdo-sngags bstan-pa'i nyi-ma's *Lta grub shan 'byed* and its autocommentary, on which see Kennard Lipman, "What Is Buddhist Logic?" in S. D. Goodman and R. Davidson, eds., *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation* (Albany: SUNY Press, forthcoming).

43. On this distinction see Ruegg, *Literature of the Madhyamaka School,* 64 and 88.

44. In point of fact this very confusion has been an obstacle to the study of the development of Indian logic. See, e.g., Vidyabhusana, *A History of Indian Logic,* 500 n. 1.

45. Note that it is here that Mi-pham situates most of the interpretive rules of thumb enumerated in the standard scholastic manuals. Cf. the section on "The Scholastic Background" above and the articles referred to in nn. 7 and 8.

46. Nonveridical, that is, in the absolute sense, which does not preclude their being *conventionally* veridical.

47. From a philosophical perspective it is of supreme interest that while Mi-pham considers, e.g., the conjunction of being and nonbeing to be a metaphysical absurdity, he nonetheless maintains that it can be in some sense *objectified.* This merits comparison with certain of the proposals of Alexius Meinong as detailed in his "The Theory of Objects," translated in Roderick M. Chisholm, ed., *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960). A lucid introduction to Meinong's theory may be found in Leonard Linsky, *Referring* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), chap. 2.

48. This is so because the conventional dichotomy of subject and object is a fundamental aspect of the unknowing which is the root of saṃsāric entanglement. For the precise formulation of this in accord with the cosmology of the Rnying-ma-pa school, see Bdud-'joms Rin-po-che 'Jigs-bral-ye-shes-rdo-rje, *Gsang sngags snga 'gyur rnying ma ba'i bstan pa'i rnam gzhag mdo tsam brjod pa legs bshad snang ba'i dga'i ston* (Kalimpong: Dudzom Rinpochee [sic], 1967), 4b6 ff. Translated in G. Dorje and M. Kapstein, *Fundamentals and History of the Nyingmapa Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.*

49. Cf. E. H. Johnston, ed., *Ratnagotravibhāga* (Patna: Bihar Research Institute, 1950), 1.154, p. 76; and *Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* 5.21, in P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Aṣṭasāhasrikā,* Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 4 (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960), 523.

50. P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Lalitavistara,* Buddhist Texts Series 1 (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1958), 317. The sūtra refers to them merely as the "eight great treasures" *(aṣṭau mahānidhānāni).*

51. Carl G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," in Herbert Feigl and Wilfred Sellars, eds., *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), 459–471.

52. G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957); Georg Henrik von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971). An introduction to the domain in which analytic philosophy and hermeneutics intersect is provided by Roy J. Howard, *Three Faces of Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

53. For a concise presentation of Paul Ricoeur's view here see his *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences,* ed. and trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chap. 5 ("What Is a Text? Explanation and Understanding"). Ricoeur does not seek to deny that explanation and understanding are distinct operations, but refuses to accept Dilthey's absolute bifurcation of their respective domains. In sum (p. 157), ". . . it will be upon the same terrain, within the same sphere of language [*langage*], that explanation and interpretation will enter into debate." By contrast, analytic critics have tended to focus upon the supposed dichotomy between the two process categories of natural causation and intentional agency. See Donald Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); and John R. Searle *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), chap. 4 ("Intentional Causation"). One philosopher who has systematically examined both the causation-agency and the explanation-understanding dichotomies is R. M. Chisholm. In the *Person and Object* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1979), 69-72 ("The Agent as Cause"), he denies that there is any "unbridgeable gap" between the members of the former pair, whereas in *The Foundations of Knowing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), chap. 7 ("Verstehen: The Epistemological Question"), he concludes that the latter distinction is indeed a significant one. Implicit in Chisholm's work, therefore, is the important observation that strict parallelism between these two distinctions need not be presupposed. At the time of this writing I have no clear sense of how Buddhist epistemologists would have treated the notion of *Verstehen.*

54. *Mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo,* sec. 4.

55. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Recherches Logique,* trans. Hubert Élie et al. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), vol. 2, pt. 2, sec. 5, p. 174: "There are not two things . . . which are present in the experience; we do not experience the object and, beside it, the intentional experience which relates to it. . . ."

56. When we survey the history of western hermeneutics since Schleiermacher we find also theory of interpretation becoming fused with more general aspects of epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language. What I wish to suggest at this juncture is that any theory of interpretation which generalizes its concerns beyond the elaboration of rules of thumb required in connection with the study of a given corpus must inevitably undergo some such transformation, for the reason that interpretive acts and their objects, when considered in general and not specified, are none other than rational and linguistic acts and their objects. If this is so, then hermeneutics as scriptural interpretation will be in essence the conjunction of the appropriate domains of general philosophical inquiry with those rules which are elaborated specifically to link such inquiry with the scriptural corpus under consideration. And this seems to be just what is accomplished by the Buddhist enumerations of interpretive keys. If, in the light of these observations, we turn to western scholastic traditions, I think we will find that logic, theology, rational psychology, etc., are within those traditions hermeneutical in just the same sense that Buddhist philosophy is here claimed to be hermeneutical.

57. It is of interest in this connection that the first western work explicitly

consecrated to interpretation theory was a treatise on logic, Aristotle's *De Interpretatione.*

58. Karma-pa VII Chos-grags rgya-mtsho, *Tshad ma rigs gzhung rgya mtsho* (Thimphu: Topga Tulku, 1973), vol. 1, p. 5, ll. 1–5: *tshad mar gyur pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das de nyid kyis . . . chos kyi 'khor lo gnas skabs dang mthar thug gi don la bslu ba med cing sngar ma shes pa'i yang dag pa'i don phyin ci ma log pa gsal bar shes pa'i slad du bskor bar mdzad la/ de'ang gdul bya so so'i dbang gis drang ba'i don dang/ nges pa'i don dang/ sgra ji bzhin pa dang/ ji bzhin ma yin pa dang dgongs pa can dang/ ldem por dgongs pa ci rigs pa'i tshul gyis gnas pa las/ de'i don gdul bya rnams kyis rtogs dka' bar gzigs nas gtan tshigs rigs pa'i sgo nas bde blags tu rtogs par bya ba dang/ ma rtogs pa dang/ log par rtogs pa dang/ the tshom la sogs pa bsal ba'i slad du bdag nyid chen po phyogs kyi glang pos bde bar gshegs pa'i gsung rab ma lus pa tshad ma gsum gyis legs par gtan la phab ste/*